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MY CANDLES

AND OTHER POEMS

ELIZA BOYLE O'REILLY

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MY CANDLES

AND OTHER POEMS

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BY

ELIZA BOYLE O'REILLY

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MY CANDLES

ONCE in a seaport on the coast of France
I found a tranquil church, time-scarred and gray,
High on a hill, a beacon to the bay;
I saw a rough lad reverently advance,
Drop his small coin, and with an upward glance
At the dim altar, light his candle. Yea,
Amid the wild storm of the ocean spray
This token had been vowed against mischance.

" O Faith ! " I cried, " Thou art a wondrous thing ! "
Forthwith I lighted candles that were mine —
Tapers of trust in purpose, kindness, youth :
Now, when the beating waves or still calms bring
Discouragement, I bend before the shrine
Of the dead mighty ones who strove for Truth.

RETURN OF THE CATTLE IN SEPTEMBER

(Switzerland)

DOWN from the crags of the mountains,
Down from the lands near the skies,
Lands, where the great river fountains
Rippling arise,
Down come the herds of the cattle,
Musical bells ringing clear,
Back to their bondage as chattel,
Lowing in fear.

Wistful the eyes of the younglings,
Born on the heights near the moon
Stifling to them is the valley,
Sun-wrapt at noon;
Frighted, bewildered, they scatter,
Pant for their freedom of old,
Stern drives the voice of the herdsman
On to the fold.

Patient, subdued, plod the elders —
Thraldom to man know they well! —
Back in the field and the farm-yard
Once more to dwell!

RETURN OF THE CATTLE IN SEPTEMBER

Herd follows herd down the highroad,
Day is o'ershadowed for me,
Grieved is my heart by the tramping:
Life should be free!

Cold, will they dream of their summer?
Dream of their mountains aloft?
Paths never trod by a mortal?
Cloud-touches soft?
Dream, when the snow hides the valley,
Village, and mile-stone, and rill,
Dream that a white-shrouded playground
Misses them still?

Down from the crags of the mountains,
Down from the lands near the skies,
Lands, where the great river fountains
Rippling arise;
Down come the herds of the cattle,
Musical bells ringing clear,
Back to their bondage as chattel,
Lowing in fear.

MONA LISA

AT white-crowned Milan, Leonardo stayed
To paint del Giacondo's wife, whose face
For him possessed that inward haunting grace,
That subtlety of look which he essayed
Through life to seize, a mystery to evade
All but his perfect master-touch. The space
Of four long years he gave to this keen chase,
And ever, while he strove, had music played.

Madonna Lisa smiles on us the same
As on her tortured painter. Though her bloom
Faded long since, though dull the canvas stands,
We still surmise — wisdom or craft — the name
For her rapt look, inscrutable as doom.
" Decipher me ! " She waits with folded hands.

A mile of Eastern roses scents one flask:
A hundred resolutions urge one deed:
He who would here fulfil his daily task
On noblest thoughts must feed —
Grow gardens for a seed.

SPRING LONGINGS

OH, I'm longing and I'm yearning for the Spring!
Oh, the Spring!
When the brown earth's smell is sweeter
Than a summer rose to me,
When the lake's dark water gleams again
And ice floats down to sea,
When I pluck a common bramble
Just because it bears a leaf,
And I carol with the bluebird,
"Past is winter — past is grief!
'Tis the Spring!"

Even evergreens are fresher,
I shall nibble their new shoots,
Crying, "Ho, ye hardy rascals,
Ye would play spring's substitutes?
Would be flaunting as the blossoms
Heralding their ruddy fruits?"
"Our turn!" pipe the periwinkles
Clustered round the hoary roots —
"'Tis the Spring!"

And beside the wooded hillock
Runs a pathway that I know,
Where the pine trees drop their needles,
Where the sun rays warmly glow :
Ah, the scent of that wild pathway
Haunts as poignant memories do,
Where the pine trees drop their needles
And the golden stars prick through
In the Spring !

And beyond that vibrant archway
Gleams the dog-wood as of old,
My own dog-wood bough ! I wonder
Will its leaves again unfold
With the same white startling radiance ?
Will it soar with haughty mien
So imperious with the flowering
That it scorns the common green
Of the Spring ?

Oh, I'm longing and I'm yearning for the Spring !
Oh, the Spring !
When Jack preaches from his pulpit,
With severe prim countenance
To the thronging reckless columbines,
And the lady slippers dance,

And the sweet, demure anemones
Cry — "Such wild extravagance!"
When the blunt wake-robin sturdily
Maintains, with bold-eyed glance —
"'Tis the Spring!"

Then grow waxen twin-born flowerets
Fit to grace a fairy's head —
(Autumn gnomes will rob her of them
When they turn to berries red!)
Then wild lilies of the valley
Cool and sylvan carpets spread
Much too delicate and lovely
For a mortal foot to tread.
Oh, the Spring!

Far away there is a bower;
Every year I seek it out,
Past the furrowed field, the orchard,
Near a bank where oak trees sprout;
There the timid yellow bellworts
Droop their slender heads, in doubt
Whether blossoms claim them kindred
Or the fresh young grass about.
Oh, the Spring!

Other flowers are more stately,
Rich in color, brave in show,
But I hold my simple bellwort
Dearer than all flowers that blow;
For I fancy it remembers me
All winter 'neath the snow,
And when springtime comes, it whispers,
"I am waiting! Will he know
'Tis the Spring?"

And I purpose — tell it softly,
Oh, ye poor leaf-barren trees!
Trill ye cannot, chirp it lightly,
Winter birds, adown the breeze.
There's a heart I hope to conquer,
There's a gentle heart may yield,
When the ice-bound brook runs free again
And bluets deck the field
In the Spring.

We shall seek, perhaps together
Hand in hand, each well-loved nook,
I shall crown her fair with violets
Plucked beside the merry brook.
Ah, perhaps she'll let me lead her —

SPRING LONGINGS

Spring sap surging warm and wild —
To the bed of yellow bellwort
That I've cherished since a child!
Oh, I'm longing and I'm yearning for the Spring!
Oh, the Spring!

THY GRAVE, AND MINE

WHEN thou art dead
What friendly tree would'st thou have grow
Above thy head,
That this forgetful world may know,
Here lieth one who hath outwitted woe?

A sturdy oak?
But oaks are for the white-haired sage,
Since sober cloak
And rugged bark are fit for age
That hath endured a time-worn pilgrimage:

A poplar slim?
'Tis meet for those who chant through life
The easy hymn
Of passive quietude, whose knife
Forth from its sheath is never drawn in strife:

Nor is the elm
Although a fair and gracious tree
Within thy realm,
Thou who dost ever long to be
In wildest brakes, at gladsome liberty!

No — 'tis the beech
That thou must choose. Its rustling shade
This earth will teach,
There is such bliss as moon-lit glade,
Such ecstasy as plighted youth and maid;

There are such things
As perfect growing symmetry,
As swallow wings,
Such keen delight as tossing free
Great wind-swept branches in exultant glee.

* * * * * * *

And if, my friend,
I should the first meet death, I pray
Above me bend
Cedars of Lebanon! Array
These dark-clad kingly aliens here astray,

THY GRAVE, AND MINE

Sublime bequest
To me in my forgotten grave
So still at rest.
Loved tree! in benediction wave
O'er one who joys intangible did crave,

One who, like thee,
Strange Cedar! sighed for far-off lands
Of mystery.
O tree! dost dream thy mountain scans
The wide horizon, for its exiled bands

Across the sea?
Some distant Lebanon, I know
Waits too for me,
Where saffron-bordered rivers flow,
Where aloes bloom, where fragrant breezes blow.

COURAGE!

I SHOWED my Love —
(Tears in her eyes,
Thunder above
All dark her skies,) —

I showed my Love
A land bird brave,
Floating above
The clamorous wave.

Small pinions spread
Proudly he sailed:
Looked down in dread,
And fluttering, quailed:

Rose high anon;
Lost heart once more;
Still strove he on
And gained the shore!

COURAGE!

If little bird,
  Dear Love, I cried,
Soars undeterred
  By fiercest tide,

Smile then, dark eyes,
  Love, smile on me,
Thou too wilt rise,
  Wilt breast the sea.

FANCIES

OH, I would be that simple shepherd boy
In sea-bound Melos, when he turned the sod
That hid through vandal years a perfect joy,
Ages could not destroy,
A marble goddess dreaming of a god.
Dinted and stained and broken, no alloy
Could taint her! Did he fall and worship there
That island shepherd, Pagan unaware,
And ever after go through life astray
With thirst no earth-born beauty could allay?
Fain would I be that boy!

Oh, I would be that distant gazing star
That loves each ripple of this earth beneath
And one still night when bleak the calendar,
When shepherds hoar unbar
Their snow-flocks, drive them forth o'er hill and heath
To hide in spotless white each crag and scar,
My star aloft would see with deep surprise
This earth he thought he knew, whose rare disguise

Makes her as strange, as when a noble aim
Wraps a friend's frailties from all carping blame.
Fain would I be that star!

Oh, I would be those architects of fire
Before whose half-shut eyes an Amiens rose,
Or Chartres bodied forth their vast desire,
And transept, nave, and choir
Sprang up, a living thought in stone's repose.
Long years have passed away since such men dreamed
Doubtful their very names have grown, they seemed
To care not for the coming ages' praise,
Enough for them one deathless prayer to raise.
Fain would I soar — their spire!

LINES AT IPSWICH

LONG banks of drifted sand shut out the sea,
White fossil waves piled up in barren state;
No life lives here: a buried orchard tree
But makes the dreary scene more desolate.
As one who in a sleep unfortunate,
Fain would escape some fast-pursuing fear
Yet cannot move, — so strains a traveller here.

The friendly ocean, longing for the fields,
Whose rustling groves it hears beyond the sand,
Silently up the peaceful river steals
And lays its arms about the dune-locked land.
Around this hillock, here where oaks command,
The sea-born waters lure, and swallows fly
Backward and forward, flitting endlessly.

And skimming o'er the inlets, each can see
His mirrored image in the tranquil streams,
And breathlessly he dips, as if to be

At one with it. In vain! Like man who dreams
That with a loved one's life, his own life seems
A perfect unison, till late he learns
Each separate soul in isolation yearns.

On quivering wing the restless swallows float,
And headlong flashing sweep, and upward soar,
And curve back to the water. Like remote
Vague thoughts now seem they, hovering round the door
Of Mystery, like brooding thoughts that pore
On the Eternal, touch their wings in flight,
Yet never wholly lose themselves in light.

But as I mused, a sportsman in the marsh
Scattered a shot, and swift away then sped
The frightened scudding swallows, at the harsh
Discordant sound. One drooped his eager head,
Fluttered, and fell into the water — dead.
And then I wondered what that swallow found
Within the stream it loved to circle round.

TO CHARLES LAMB

O CHOICE and kindly spirit, in whose sight
The grimy London streets were fair as lanes
Of leafy Devon, whose fine fancy found
Visions of Venice in a Margate Hoy!
A weary length of days in labor spent
Dulled not your soul, and when the respite came,
Like some pale victim of the old Bastile
Freed from his dungeon after forty years,
You wandered forth, perplexed to find yourself
Afar from Mincing Lane at hour of 'Change;
Till eating of the lotus leaf of rest
Those vexing years of arid industry
Stretched like a fragile landscape in a mist.

Rare heart that beat with loyalty undimmed
To cheer a tragic mystery of fate!
As true a hero in your lowly life
As Nelson dying on his gallant ship!

TO CHARLES LAMB

O gentle scholar mid your folios old!
O master of shy wit and humour sweet,
Of moving pathos, and quaint phantasy,
Lead us to courage and a dauntless trust,
May we too wander by a turbid Thames
As if its waters were the rippling Lee.

TO-DAY

THERE is a precious flitting thing
Almost unknown to fame,
Though gentle poets often sing
Its pleasing antiquated Spring,
Or tell its coming aim,
'Tis rarely that these poets wing
Their rhymes, to greet this outcast king
When *Present* is its name.

They sing of happiness gone by,
They tell of sorrows past,
And olden days they beautify,
And olden ways they dignify,
And old-time thoughts recast;
This living moment they outfly
Of future hours to prophesy —
A future proud and vast.

And we who are not poets too
This wistful hour disdain;
Old Yesterday we would renew,
And false To-morrow would pursue,
To-day smiles here in vain,
Until it goes with sad "Adieu,"
To join the Yesterday we rue,
Too late we cry, "Remain!"

WHILE WE SLEEP

WHILE we sleep (we think the world sleeps with us!)
Through the moist brown earth the mushroom grows,
In the dark it spreads its faery table:
Night-time knows
All the witchcraft of the spider's weaving,
Proves his kinship with that spinner rare,
Hanging dewdrops in his web of gauze threads,
Light as air.

While we sleep (imagining Life sleepeth!)
There's a flower opens in delight,
Yields the fragrance of its snowy blossom
To the night;
But when the hardier flowers lift and waken,
When earth greets again the gairish day,
Then the midnight cereus, blighted, drooping,
Fades away.

WHILE WE SLEEP

While we sleep (lost in unconscious dreamland!)
Rises soft the crescent moon afar,
Close companioned is she by the wondrous
Morning star:
Gleams a pageant, amber, rose, and lilac,
Upward is night's sombre curtain drawn
For the lucid, opalescent marvel
Of the dawn.

(In Patris Memoriam)

GREAT men of science say we vainly dream
When hoping for a life beyond this soil,
Or that reward will crown our ceaseless toil;
They say, "We do not know." And it doth seem
To these revealers of Earth's mighty scheme
A poorer faith to trust, than to recoil
From hope unproved. They hold, in life's turmoil
To wait at peace, though blind, the hour supreme.

In doubt I mused on one whom Death had claimed:
Now, when I die, he may not welcome me
I sighed. . . . Across my brain a mean thought brushed,
A buzzing petty thing I swiftly shamed,
For suddenly I *knew* his soul was free
To read my thought, and in the dark, I blushed.

THE PRIVILEGED HOUR

I

UP Lustleigh Cleave I went one summer eve,
And as I climbed I met a child at play
Of whom I asked "What is a cleave?"
Then through that pleasant Devon way,
Through uplands strewn with giant stone,
With granite boulders rent and overthrown,
She guided me.
"Some one up there," she said,
And heavenward went her eyes, in childhood's vague surmise,
"I think he scattered something here."
I answered, "Mere rough rocks, I fear."
Perplexed but confident she shook her head:
"Oh — not rocks then!" she chided me.
Thou never failing mystery
In which a child can wrap this earth
From doubt, from chill of unbelief, this earth
Of grievous death, of ever-hopeful birth!

II

Within my heart
That peaceful eve, on Lustleigh Cleave,
All turned to revery apart;
I looked not back, but down, upon the past.
Breathing an ampler air, I felt a thrill
Of memory; just as each tor-crowned hill
Against the opal sky, then seemed so near
My hand might reach them, past days did appear,
And all as clear,
As chalets on a mountain, when a cloud
Breaks, and they stand rain-washed and proud,
So clear — each vanished year!
Then thoughts that warred and struggled seemed to be
United in a brotherly amity,
Their jangled notes fell into harmony.
Then questions answered were,
Wheat garnered from the tare;
And routed *Wherefore* fled outcast,
Though mocking to the last.

III

Why vainly should I grieve
Because I knew Life was a passing thing,
As swift and transient as the eagle wing,
That floated high above the fading moor,
'Neath Lustleigh Cleave?
For Life fulfils its purpose; none so poor
That He will scorn. Do not His words proclaim
Eagle and ant the same?
The busy little ant, close by my feet,
As needful in his scheme, as all complete
As soaring eagle in the cloud-piled sky?
Then suddenly it seemed that I
Was freed a hitherto harsh bond,
No more a slave or victim, but a fond
And erring child, I crept unto His knee;
No longer dark my onward pathway lay,
Since flowers He made to bloom, and birds to sing,
Since night and day,
Sad man may hear this joyous welkin ring,
His flowers, His birds, His world, why were they not
for me?

IV

Clear sight was mine, an hour privileged!
Then happiness
No longer seemed a Golden Fleece to pique
Our eagerness,
A Nibelungen treasure, far to seek.
In every breast it lies, a garden fair,
Unhedged,
Free as the universal air.
Though some there go who have no eyes to see,
And some have sight but for one hour, ah me!
An hour's reprieve, a Lustleigh Cleave!
And some who, learned grown in worldly lore,
Tiresias-like, too closely scrutinize
This bit of heaven in disguise,
And straight are stricken blind, and see no more:
Still are there others, those we call the seers,
Who guard this golden inner light for years.

V

Though swiftly sped my hour and left
Me sore bereft,
Though meagre thoughts again were mine,
And faltering design,
Yet to my soul was then confided
A trust inviolate that since hath guided
With voice benign.
For like the patriarch Isaac, who at eve
Oft sought the pensive fields to meditate, a bower,
A field apart have I,
A memory I know will never die.
Serene as solitude it waits at rest,
Within its narrow span it holds my best —
A single hour
That from the thousands dead, found strength to raise
its head.

VI

Wisely that happy little child,
Her fancies of the world did weave,
At play upon thy Devon wild,
O Lustleigh Cleave!
And since that summer day I too believe.
Not with an alien eye I look
On mystics who have shut life's active book,
And isolated on the mountains pray;
A kindling ray
Has taught me sympathy with all who bend the knee,
With joyous carol, or with plaintive plea,
Whether in Trappist cell they kneel,
Or Eastern mosque,
All are found worthy in the end I feel,
If from the heart rises the holocaust.
Though some may call Him Nature, the Ideal,
His mind, all-knowing, reads beneath the name,
The vague and hidden aim.
In the true brotherhood of those who think and dream,
Who upward yearn with prayer, or strife
Incessant, therein lies the gleam,
The bond that binds us to His perfect Life.

VII

O Lustleigh Cleave that brought my hour to me,
O desolate wan scene, the Druid's old demesne,
Mist-hid thy hills and streams may be,
And others find thee not so fair to see!
For one, thou art the outward sign of grace,
Of that sweet inward grace, man's restless soul doth trace
Through level deserts of material things.
O soaring wings
Whereon I rose to heights above my power!
O radiant remnant of a dower,
Inherited from far and lofty lineage!
White-gleaming landmark! thou dost show
The skyward path that I, so low
Here on the ground, now desolate,
Once mounted in my pilgrimage
To thy high state:
The vast Eternal through this gate
I sought, the Inaccessible through this portico.
Ah, when at last we pierce the veiling haze,
The luring mystery of the inner shrine,
Then shall we know, ah, then shall we divine,

Why He hath hidden His almighty ways
From our close-prying sceptic gaze;
Then shall we praise
His wisdom infinite, His great design!

A BOAST AND ITS ANSWER

DELIGHT, and love, and song, and ecstasy,
I'll write in golden letters on the sky,
And gloom, and fear, and hate, and misery,
In the earth's centre buried deep will lie,
When I am King. Oh, what a world 'twill be!

What will poor sparrows do when peacocks sing?
When thunder never rolls, no rainbow span!
When tears mean joy, sweet sympathy, take wing!
When June is endless, fly, dear hope, from man!
A stupid world 'twill be, when you are King!

PEASANTS CLIMBING TO MÜRREN

ALOFT we climb, aloft, aloft!
We leave the troubled vale below,
The tumbling rivulets rave and flow,
The fretting cataracts downward go,
Aloft we climb, aloft!
And sweet and clear our lilts we sing,
And far and far our yodels fling,
And wide and wide the echoes ring,
Aloft we climb, aloft!

Through fields we mount, by chalets lone,
By rustling oak, by startling birch,
A single bird chants from his perch,
Mid groves of larch, the Alpine church
Calm worship claims her own.
Faint grows the troubled vale below,
The tumbling rivulets rave and flow,
The fretting cataracts downward go;
Aloft we climb, aloft!

PEASANTS CLIMBING TO MÜRREN

Zigzag we mount, pass and repass,
The woods are spent, the rocks are bare,
Steep is the way, but keen the air,
The snow gleams white, and almost there
Led on by waiting, loving lass,
Aloft we climb, aloft, aloft!
And sweet and clear our lilts we sing,
And far and far our yodels fling,
And wide and wide the echoes ring,
Aloft we climb, aloft!

MOMENTS

SOMETIMES when we stretch our finite vision
To the stars, we tremble at the thought —
Countless years their light hath hither travelled,
Ages, fought
Strenuous cleaving pathway through the ether!
Breathlessly we picture nameless spheres
Whose white radiance never yet has reached us,
Æon-years!

Sometimes when we pause in midmost ocean,
Watch unlimited the darkness spread,
While the tearing, shuddering vessel thunders,
We are led
To an altar of a deep thanksgiving
That a pygmy mortal still may hold
Safe his way, mid vast unconquered powers
Manifold!

Or at times upon a mountain summit,
Viewing town and hamlet, lake and stream,
Sometimes then we faintly feel a portent,
Touch a dream;
Wake, to find again that we know nothing,
Age has followed age with dreams the same!
We are insects beating wings of tissue
Round a flame.

ET EGO IN ARCADIA!

OF all the sad things in this world that are,
The saddest is a lonely heart in Spring,
Lone as a tawny thrush with broken wing,
Silent, when woodlands sing.

METAPHYSICS

FROM early ages men have tried to read
The world and human destiny: in vain
By water, fire, or numbers they explain
The universe. Each, from a varying need,
Cries — "Here is truth!" The vaunted pathways lead
To phantom bridges that can bear no strain.
Illusive deeps these mariners attain,
Where circles circles endlessly succeed.

A lesson could they learn of him who drew
The famed Last Supper, on a convent wall,
Still potent, though in ruin. Since he knew
How futile was the effort to inthrall
His archetype, he made man's image true,
But left unfinished the chief Head of all.

A BALLAD OF THE LOIRE

(Ballade à Double Refrain)

FRANCE in her garden of Touraine
With vine and orchard casts her spell,
With fields of flax, and lands of grain,
With castle, spire, and citadel,
White solemn towns like monks in cell;
And past them all, with dashing spray,
Or languid, lazy, lilting swell,
On rolls the Loire to Biscay Bay.

Flowing from hills of mist and rain,
In far Le Puy, it heard the bell
Ring from that high basaltic chain
With castle, spire, and citadel;
Bordered with gorse and asphodel,
By Blois and her road-stairways gay,
Sliding through arches parallel,
On rolls the Loire to Biscay Bay.

Chaumont, Amboise, and Tours, in vain
Woo it to linger, each to tell
She is the loveliest in its train
With castle, spire, and citadel;
Mirror for Cinq Mars' sentinel,
Brooding on that grim sphinx astray,
Dreaming of things that once befell
On rolls the Loire to Biscay Bay.

Envoy

Prince: be you true or infidel
With castle, spire, and citadel,
Though Time and Ruin claim *you* prey
On rolls the *Loire* to Biscay Bay.

TOURAINE SONNETS

I

THE STAIRCASE OF BLOIS

HERE up and down went kings and queens in gold
And damask, echoes of their pageant days
Still haunt this stairway; past these empty bays
Flit ghosts that should in marble tombs lie cold.
'Tis here the palace-building prince enrolled
His salamander, in a wondrous maze
Of lovely images! Intrigues, displays,
And tales of crime, these worn gray steps withhold!

Unknown the carver of this gem may be;
Surely its fair design is worthy him
Who thought a king for patron not amiss:
The great Da Vinci found beside the sea,
One day, a wave-washed shell (so 'tis my whim
To fancy) from whose spiral whorl grew this.

II

SUNSET AT CHAUMONT

A scorching heat had burned the fields of hay,
And shrunk the Loire within dull banks of sand;
Whitened with dust I sighed: Is this the land
Where Francis rode with feast and roundelay?
Did wily Catherine, from her casement-bay
Watch her weak lord, a falcon on his hand,
Hunting with dark Diane, this woodless strand?
Is castled history so parched and gray?

But when from Chaumont's cliff I saw the sun,
Beyond the river sink, a crimson sphere,
Faint grew the days when noble or high dame
Strolled this fair court; as if to honor one,
A wandering prince of Art, who lingered here,
The royal sunset flamed in Turner's name.

III

CHENONCEAU

In the long gallery that spans the stream
At Chenonceau, walked Mary when a bride,
Mary of Scotland, in her youthful pride
As queen, and there she dreamed her radiant dream
Of early love, and her white life did seem
To stretch enticing as the river side
In all its sunny loveliness. No guide,
Alas, to counsel her mid snare and scheme!

"Adieu, charmant paye de France," she sang,
Watching the low-hung Norman coast recede:
Far north in her bleak castle when the wind
Swept down from Arthur's Seat did not a pang
Of longing come for distant Cher's gay mead,
For days of simple faith, untortured mind?

IV

JOAN AT CHINON

When travel-stained Joan an audience prayed
Of Charles, another served as king, to be
Her test, and sceptic lordlings thronged to see
The peasant girl's defeat; but unafraid
She, for a space, the dazzling court surveyed,
Then going to the true king, bowed her knee:
"O gentle Dauphin! God is pleased to free
Your captive France through poor Joan the Maid."

"But yonder is the king!" cried Charles, in fear.
Joan uplifted eyes of purest trust:
"'Tis you, my Prince, must wield the sword I bring,"
She answered, led by vision-guide as clear
As is a certain voice called conscience, just
Firm voice that leads as well a languid king

SONG

1

HEIGH-HO! the sun shines
In this heart-happy May.
And the bobolink sings,
And my heart is as gay,
And the columbine swings!
And each shy little leaf
Doffs her cloak, noon is brief,
Heigh-ho! the sun shines!

2

Ah me! the rain falls!
And the song-thrush is dumb,
And the woodlands are drear,
And the blight time has come:
Every joy leaves a tear
Just as roses — a thorn,
Just as eve follows morn,
Ah me! the rain falls!

3

Wake! while the sun shines!
Jocund Spring, fickle sprite,
With the foam-flower flies,
Wings its radiant flight
When the fawn-lily sighs,
Soon November will bring
Chilling frosts, then in Spring,
Wake! while the sun shines!

WORDSWORTH

THE olden Prophets bore no loftier name
Than thine, O Poet of the peaceful hills!
Whose inward eye found bliss in daffodils.
Austerely pure, remote from sordid aim,
The lowly ones of earth from thee could claim
Impassioned contemplation. Thy word refills
The sinking lamps of wayfarers, and stills
Their flickering light to burn a constant flame.

And when the fretting cities warp and bind
With customs, lifeless as the desert sand,
When scentless droop the lily and the rose,
Then is thy "mountain atmosphere of mind."
Thy steadfast quietude of heart and hand,
An oasis of luminous repose.

RONDEAUS IN A LIBRARY

I

FRIENDS we can claim who neither change nor die,
Who rouse, who cheer, who soothe, who satisfy:
Whether true knight, or monkish chronicler,
Saint who loved bird and beast, bold voyager,
A slave of low estate, an Emperor high,

Courtier or peasant, each must justify
His right to enter here, must not belie
Fame's choice, till called by Time, (stern arbiter!)
Friends we can claim.

Yet from this treasure wantonly we fly!
Nor list these voices brotherly that cry!
We stumble on, and newer gods prefer;
The best is here, the great Past's messenger,
But with impatient sigh we still deny
Friends we can claim!

II

THE ENGLISH POETS

Bird choristers thrive in this fair domain,
Here happy warblers trill, and doves complain,
Larks soar and sing, a "moon-tranced nightingale"
Floods for one short-lived hour the breathless vale,
And pensive pewees sound a thoughtful strain;

Here graceful mocking-birds true voices feign,
Here thrushes in the wood high notes attain
Of rich cathedral music, all — we hail
Brave choristers!

There is one songster holds supremest reign,
And when he sings, then other songs are vain,
Before his harmonies all rivals pale:
It seems as if the tenderest birdling frail
Lodged in an eagle's breast; of joy, of pain
Chief chorister!

III

Most sad but true, there are no friends so free
And stanch as they who make this silent plea:
No fret find here, no alienations dark;
Perpetual youth is ours: would you but hark
To us — your ever steadfast comrades we!

With us you sail the skies, you hold the key
That locks the universe, you taste the tree
Of knowledge, finite limitations mark
Most sad but true.

And would you know the inner man you see?
Ask him his teaching sage; what melody
Can thrill his soul; what pilot steers his bark
To islands of the Blest; his kindling spark.
The boundless soul shrinks to its choice, decree
Most sad but true.

ON THE LAKE

(A SUMMER DAY IDYLL)

I

YOUTH

(*She sings*)

AWAKEN with the day
As glad as leaves in May!
Throw open wide thy arms to greet the sun!
O lift the drooping flowers
That waste the early hours,
"Awake, ye laggards, for the day's begun!"

And like the morning's bride,
All fresh and dewy-eyed,
O carol that the world is full of bliss,
O sing it sweet and near,
O sing it loud and clear,
"Was ever such a morn as brave as this!"

So many things to love!
Give thanks to One above, —
O let a joyous heart thy anthem be!
So lavishly is given
The fairest gift of heaven —
Another perfect day He gives to thee!

II

SHADOWS

(*He muses*)

At the edge of the lake slow we drift, side by side,
Cleaving straight through the heart of a pine tree we glide;
Even crags cannot hinder us, over we slip,
Lichened rocks float around us, and there on the tip
Of the cedar, a phantom bird prunes golden wings,
In the ripples he swings!
Now, above and below us, the tender young sheen
Of the willows, encircling brown arches and green,
Making dim this our covert. All hushed is our bower!
And your head on my heart like a wild apple flower,
While beneath us there quiver the blossoms of bay,—
— Oh, I wonder, if we are the shadows or they!

III

REMONSTRANCE

"The gray is on my brow:
Too old for such as thou!"
"O let my arms, like summer chaplets, bind!"
"But sad for me is life,
Not feast, but earnest strife."
"'Mongst rugged mountains, flowering valleys wind."

"I cannot lift my voice
At daybreak to rejoice."
"When birds are mated 'tis not both that sing."
"Nay, I should blight thy flower,
Should squander thy youth's dower."
"All thine to waste what heritage I bring!"

"As transient as the May
Young love will pass away."
"When May is over, August still is fair."
"Soon will November come—
Ah, autumn chills benumb!"
"But glows the hearth more warm in winter bare."

"Youth should find mate with youth:
Illusion and stern truth
Have never yet kept friendship well, I fear."
"Ah, see that oak tree strong,
It proves thee in the wrong,
The happy blue-eyed grass has clustered near.

"Yield, Dear my Love, to me
Thy summer let me be —
Long years of summer that will never fade;
Though this first joy may go,
Sing will my heart, I know,
If it find nest within the oak tree's shade."

IV

NOON

(*She sings*)

Come from the sun, O you silly little water-flies!
Here's a great o'erhanging ledge, just for you 'tis hewn!
Darting so ceaselessly, flashing so restlessly,
Can you never pause to nap, a summer afternoon?

Come from the sun, O you wilted yellow lily-head!
Here's a cool broad lily-pad, under which to swoon,
Vie not with the golden sun, futile competition shun,
All but he should take a nap, a summer afternoon.

Come from the sun, O you giddy-pated humming bird!
Here's a mass of honeysuckle, fragrant as the June.
Nay, flutter hitherward, not away thitherward,
Foolish little humming bird, humming in the noon.

Let down the curtains of your eyes, O my tired one,
Drowsily I'll sing to you, any lazy thing to you,
Happy could I bring to you, dream of silver moon,
Coolest dream I'd wing to you, this summer afternoon.

V

AFTERNOON

(*She sings*)

Hush, hush, O crickets shrill!
Waving grasses, hush them still,
Murmur sleepily, like trees,
Grasses! in this elfin breeze.
For my Love lies deep in slumber,
Sweetest moments would I number,
And would only have him wake again to greet the setting sun.

Quiet, quiet, noisy rill!
Muffling mosses, soothe it still!
Placid water-cresses lull it
Quiet as the gold fish swimmeth,
Quiet as the lake-edge brimmeth,
For my Love lies deep in slumber,
Sweetest moments would I number,
And would only have him wake again to greet the setting sun.

Peace, peace, O bumble-bee!
Drop not here your velvet ball,
Back to shore, O rover free,
Where the honey flowers call,
Waiting for your coronal!
Here my Love lies deep in slumber,
Sweetest moments would I number,
And would only have him wake again to greet the setting sun.

Gently, gently, fretting bird!
Breaking through the boughs,
Find your swinging nest unheard!
Fold your wings! Soft sleep endows
Even black unwinking eyes,
Shut them close and dream of skies
Deep and blue and zephyr-stirred;
For my Love lies here in slumber,
Sweetest moments would I number,
And would only have him wake again to greet the setting sun.

— The sultry summer sun,
Whose course is almost run,
— Awake! — Awake! My dearest one!

Purl your loudest, little brook!
Shrill your songs, O crickets now!
Leap, O fishes! Ripple, lake!
Little black-eyed bird, awake!
Bumble-bee, your sweets forsake!
Scatter blossoms, laurel bough!
For my Love has waked from slumber,
(Sweet those moments will I number!)
For my dearest Love has raised his head to greet the
setting sun.

VI

AT TWILIGHT

(*He sings*)

I, to whom Love has tarried long in coming,
Faint-hearted grown, I meet him now with fear;
Loud is his knock, I dare not open to him;
True is his voice, but questioning, I hear.

Once, long ago, I thought that I could claim Love,
Opened wide my portals, too soon called him mine;
Fled he my threshold, fled, ah, who shall blame Love!
Prisoned in a hemlock, hamadryads pine.

" Knock gently, Love, and silent take possession,
Lift up the latch, with courage enter here!
I, to whom thou hast tarried long in coming,
Faint-hearted grown, I welcome thee with fear."

VII

LOVE-LATE-IN-LIFE

(*She sings in the moonlight*)

Sometimes a day
Comes, dull and bleak,
Sunless and gray
As moorland creek:
O gray and bleak!

But late toward eve
A glow will spread: —
Pomegranates cleave,
Gold heart and red:
O gold and red!

A glorious surge
Will flood the sky,
From dimmest verge
To zenith high
Will flood the sky;

Nor any cloud
Will mar the gold,
Intense and proud
The crimsons hold:
O red and gold!

Bright days of sun
Have pageants too,
Whose colors run
The gamut through:
Each gleaming hue!

None can outvie
In depth and glow
A late-lit sky!
Ah, few can know
Such depth and glow!

So long doth last
The wondrous light,
When eve is past
Still burns the night:
O rarest light!

STONEHENGE

"O HAUNTING symbol deeper than the East,
Than Grecian temple, or dim Gothic nave,
What couldst thou tell of life in wood and cave,
The worship of the sun, the Druid feast!
Who was thy mighty builder? Who thy priest?"
Rugged, austere, they never answer gave
Through centuries of calm, these boulders grave,
This silent tomb of some great Soul released!

Amid wide reaches or fair field and fell,
Hearing the tinkle of the lazy sheep,
Breathing the fragrance of the yellow bloom,
The far Past lays his stern undying spell
Upon my spirit, and petty cravings sleep:
Infinitude holds here grim strife with doom.

THE POET'S VISITANT

THOU, half asleep, swayed by the deep
Flowing waters of thought on an unexplored sea,
Drifts a white sail, greets thee — "All hail!
Poet-for-me!"

Welcome thy guest, give of thy best!
This ambassador sent from a king of high spheres
Thrills with his touch, rapture is such
Moves he to tears.

As when in dreams, falling one seems,
With a start one awakes from a world far away,
Back from delight, back to the night
Wide-eyed, astray;

So when he flies, ecstasy dies,
Thou canst lisp but a hint of the bliss thou wouldst tell!
Jungfrau aglow. . . Gray fades the snow . . .
Eve rings the knell.

Leaves he in wake, what we mistake
For a poem, oh, soulless and blind that we are!
Shorn of its bloom, cold as the tomb,
Light-lacking star,

Bud without scent, passion that's spent,
All — that is flitting and fleeting and fair,
Dew that the sun captured and spun
Crystal as air.

Comes he again? None can say when;
Unexpected, infrequent, this haphazard guest:
Fitful his choice, follow his voice,
Stern though the quest!

Rain's tinted bow hides deep below
The dim base of its radiant joy-colored arch,
Treasures that lure men to endure
Hot sands that parch;

Vanquished? Ah, no! onward they go
All their lives in a search for this deep-hidden mine;
Counterfeits scorn; wait for a morn
Splendent, divine.

A BUTTRESS NICHE

ALL may not reach the topmost niche in Art,
Nor all the keystone of the portal crown,
Still, in the lofty minster of renown
Are shrines well worthy of the striving heart.
Fair shrines there are on pinnacles apart,
Holding their king or saint in palmer's gown,
Unnoticed, till some passer of the town
On looking upward, cries, "O happy Art!"

Whereon he dreams of long past joyous days,
When work was noble for itself alone,
Each leaf in shadow chiselled keen and fine
As leaf in sunlight; sadly then he prays
With the deep yearning to the artist known —
"Ah, might a nameless buttress niche be mine!"

A DEATH-BED THOUGHT

FOR though it be not given me to know
Whither I go,
Though here on earth be not for me to find
Peace both for heart and mind,—
Fond heart that claims a sentient God its own,
Cold mind, aloof, alone,
Seeking with hollow eyes a phantom, truth;
(Age all as blind as youth!)
Fond heart that cries, "Peace, peace, O restless brain,
Why mysteries profane?
Yield to His love, submission brings repose;
A flowering rose
Is faith, a wounding nettle, doubt!"
Yet, O my soul,
'Tis under your control
To sink in rest or soar. Arise! To strife!
Through death to Life?
Through death to Life!

SHAN VAN VOCHT

THERE'S a land over seas that I love, 'tis to me
Scarcely known, but as dear as to field-lark the lea,
And its song-notes can thrill me as no songs can do,
For its harp-strings have musical magic, and woo
To this land over seas —
Shan van vocht.

Fontenoy is for me as a trumpet's arouse,
'Ninety-eight holds me true as with firmest of vows,
Oh, with links strong as iron, with chains light as gold,
I am bound to the land of my forefathers bold,
To the land over seas —
Shan van vocht!

When an echo rings clear then I dream of Dunloe,
And where rivulets run of Avoca's sweet flow,
But the Boyne is the dearest! O stream of my heart,
Is it strange that you haunted an exile apart
From his land over seas —
Shan van vocht?

THE CLERK OF LIMBURG

BACK in days of old, the Middle Ages,
Once there rose a certain sprightly music,
Far and wide rang out a merry singing,
Praised by all, but nameless was the maker
Of the ballads.

Youth and age together trilled and warbled,
Such a piping of gay songs and measures!
Airy chants of glee and gladness sounded
Over Germany, with ceaseless carols
Night and morning.

Surely, thought the maids with bashful eyelids,
Humming ditties of sweet love and rapture,
Surely, debonair must be the songster,
With a lute hung o'er his velvet mantle!
Might we see him!

Unknown in the street they passed the minstrel,
He who made for them the blithesome verses;
Shuddering they passed him, gaunt and woful,
For the nameless minstrel was a leper,
Shunned, forsaken.

Shrouded in his cloak of gray all sombre,
Sounding his dread lazar bell for warning,
While the land rang with his joyous music,
Wandered that young clerk, alone and mirthless,
Broken-hearted.

Death-in-life he went! The rosy maidens
Checked their songs and shivered as he passed them;
Comely mothers crooning to their infants
Caught them to their breasts in sudden terror,
Lest he harm them.

Saddest of all tales, I think that leper's:
With a heart for love and feast and gladness,
Still to go through life, a banished outcast,
Peering in each passing face for welcome
Never given.

DETACHMENT

ONE hour I soar, with buoyant life content,
The next, an Icarus with broken wing,
Through ways of mist and dreary fog I creep.
One hour of Spring's glad joyousness, I sing,
Of fleeting blossoms, Winter still must weep,
Of rainbow radiance, so swiftly spent!
Why ever soar in vain? 'Tis well to sleep,
With dim unseeing eyes through life to stray;
Jaded and thwarted, what avails this fray?
Ascent but makes the fall more swift and deep.

For I had found in wandering to and fro,
A friend to whom I told my inmost thought;
I fancied, here at length is tranquil rest:
Till in his garden where calm peace was sought
I came unto a wall, obscure, unguessed,
For me impassable, a wall to show

The past between us, vain pretence at best.
Then friendship seemed to me a hollow reed
On which we blindly lean in hour of need,
And love — a Grail of fruitless bitter quest.

And since a restless, baffled day had killed
All sleep, I rose to watch the placid moon
Serenely smile on millions such as I.
Unmoved she hears complaint or cheerful tune!
This same unfeeling moon now looks on high,
Naveless Beauvais, sad type of unfulfilled
Great destinies; this self-same heartless sky
Bent over Herculaneum, when roared
The rocking mountain, belching death abroad,
And startled revellers fled with frighted cry.

Heartless she seemed, and therein lay the balm!
For as I gazed I felt the iron power
Of Nature's pitiless, relentless sway
Bring back lost strength and quietude: to cower

DETACHMENT

Because the skies were overcast and gray
Was a poor craven's part. Down dropped clear calm
From the impassive moon to light my way,
And with a happy confidence, I knew
Myself a thing as frail as morning dew,
A passing moment in Time's endless Day.

TRUMPETS AND BELLS

Charles VIII. I will sound my trumpets !
Capponi. We will ring our bells !

FLORENCE, 1491.

I

"I WILL sound my trumpets,"
Cries the World with pride —
"Deaden pity in the heart,
Take the stronger side ;
All shall smile and feel no joy,
Weep, and share no pain ;
One stern law shall rule the throng,
One grim judge arraign."

Answer brave, ye voices,
Firm, intrepid, true,
(Not the Many spur mankind,
But the gallant Few)
"Raise we then our heads on high,
Serve as sentinels !
Blow your trumpets to the sky,
We will ring our bells ! "

II

"I will sound my trumpets,"
Cries out "Captain Ill,"
Laying siege unto the fort
Perched upon the hill —
"Summon all my vassals mean,
Range my serfs in line,
Vanquish in the end this queen,
Desecrate this shrine."

Ring out clear the answer,
Give it gladsome voice,
As in that sweet Tuscan town
Liberty made choice:
"'Captive Good' is free at last,
Strong her citadels,
Stout her gates. Blow wide your blast!
We will ring our bells!"

III

"I will sound my trumpets,"
Cries the Winter loud —
"Wrap the rivers, lakes, and seas
In perpetual shroud;
Stiffen cataracts down the cliff,
Chill the bird on wing,
Freeze the mariner in his skiff,
Bury deep the Spring."

Listen for the answer
Underneath the snow;
Tinkling comes a murmur,
Muffled, faint, and low:
"You may blow your trumpets,"
Soft the snow-drop swells,
"You may blow your trumpets —
We will ring our bells!"

IV

"I will sound my trumpets,"
Cries the tyrant Death —
"Serried ranks of all degrees
Mow down with my breath.
Wreck and war my henchmen are,
Planets can I blight
Even as I blast a star
In empyreal flight."

Hearken to the voices
Born this day on earth: —
"Far in chaos strife has raged,
Victory for Birth!
Other stars will course the skies,
Life, Death's fate foretells."
"I will sound my trumpets!"
"We will ring our bells!"

A POET ON HIS MISTRESS' BLUSH

DEEP in a wood, low in a glen,
Rises from quartz-rock a spring,
Twin-flowers flush, mirrored there. Hush!
Quivers a cardinal wing —
Herald of joy!

First blush of love, shy as a dove,
Dawns not more rosy and fleet
Close trembling near, dew-like, a tear,
Preluding sunrise. O sweet
Herald of joy!

Harbinger rare! thou dost prepare
Way from my sovereign to me,
Yet shall I sigh, greater bliss nigh,
First blush of rapture! for thee —
Herald of joy!

INSOMNIA; COMPENSATIONS

IF I had slept, I should not know so well
The poets, nor that poignant sweetness heard,
"The earliest pipe of half-awakened bird."
Of waxing, waning moon, of sunrise spell,
The poet voice is always here to tell,
But I myself must learn his inner word.
Sleep from my brain one mighty form had blurred —
Majestic Blanc, arising gaunt and fell,
"*O struggling with the darkness all the night,*
And visited all night by troops of stars."

Nay, had calm rest been mine, I had not known
That moment, when, from picturing sheep that crept
"One after one," I suddenly awoke
To day's glad sounds, the rumbling wheel, the stroke
Of noon; from haggard darkness, worn, alone,
To cry with keen delight — Ah, I have slept!
"*Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care. . . .*
Balm of hurt minds. . . . Chief nourisher in life's
feast!"

TENNYSON'S CHILD

WHILE a comet flamed the midnight heavens,
One of England's truest poets rose,
Roused his sleeping son from childhood's perfect
Deep repose,

Wrapt him in his arms against the darkness,
Loath to startle, fain would have him see;
Straight the little child from drowsy dreamland
Wide and free,

Waked beneath the boundless vault of heaven,
Saw the trailing comet-light on high —
Nature's miracle of law's perfection
In the sky: —

Lifting eyes of wonder to his father,
Eyes that knew and loved the noble head
Bent above him, marvelling he whispered —
"Am I dead?"

TENNYSON'S CHILD

Child of genius, you have praised your Maker
Better than the mightiest hymns of man,
Pierced the husk that hides the fruiting promise
Of His plan:

When the dull earth upward casts her shadow,
Through the twilight of the world man goes,
Still o'erhead a cloudlet holds the rose tint;
Childhood knows.

THE RETURN TO HEALTH

A FIELD of poppies swaying in the breeze,
A flood of rapture bursting from the heart,
Springtime atop the newly budded trees,
O life, life, life, what is it that thou art!
A choir of snow-peaks antheming on high,
The rush of waves and ripples up the shore,
Great billowy clouds that sweep across the sky,
The onward roll of rivers evermore,
A whirl of birds whose throats rain ecstasy,
More wild, more sweet, O life, art thou to me!

Ah once, this joyous life deserted me,
And down the narrow path I watched him stray,
My outstretched arms implored, he would not stay,
But heedless left me, wan and ashen gray,
Alone to face the darkness and the strife.
'Twas then I knew how sweet was life, was life!
'Twas then I cried, "A treacherous friend thou art
To woo my love, and having won, depart."

And from the boundless waters we call death,
There crept around me close an icy breath,
And slowly, slowly ebbed my tide away.

. . . . . .

But life came back! This glorious, gladsome life!
Bubbling with laughter, rippling o'er with glee,
Tossing his flower-like head in jubilee,
Springing across the tender turf as free
As fawn or hamadryad stepped of old,
Laden with joys, with promises untold,
Glad life came back, glad life came back to me!

A field of poppies swaying in the breeze,
A flood of rapture bursting from the heart,
Springtime atop the newly budded trees,
O life, life, life, what is it that thou art!
A choir of snow-peaks antheming on high,
The rush of waves and ripples up the shore,
Great billowy clouds that sweep across the sky,
The onward roll of rivers evermore,
A whirl of birds whose throats rain ecstasy,
More wild, more sweet, O life, art thou to me!

LOST IDEALS

AS in far days the priests of Isis brought
A carved and gilded ship unto the shore,
And loaded it with spice, and pearls, and ore,
Then with fair hymns, this service having wrought,
Across the harbor bar the wide sea sought,
Where they, their votive ship, left in the roar
Of breakers, lonely ghost ne'er heard of more,
Wan spectre drifting in a search for naught:

So, eager youth sets sail a valiant heart
Freighted with gifts of dauntless faith, with gold
Of love, to find he hopes a happy mart.
Will he, white-vested priest, like those of old,
Desert his treasure ship, let it depart
Unpiloted, by stormy seas controlled?

ONCE ON A TIME

(A RONDEAU)

"ONCE on a time" are magic words for me!
They sing of small glass slippers, Bluebeard's key,
Babes in a wood, a prince and princess fair,
Ogres and goblins, Two-shoes, Silver-hair,
And one lone duckling of swan pedigree.

And deep within this realm of Fancy Free,
Where men are ruled by famous laws of three,
That unknown thing — a chimney-sweep, could scare,
Once on a time.

There, in calm peace, good folk kept jubilee,
And when they died then far across the sea
To some half vague and sweet land, debonair,
Called Greece they went, and laid in ashes were,
A land that beckoned fair to you and me
Once on a time.

HENRI DE LA ROCHEJAQUELEIN

(ONE ACT)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Henri de la Rochejaquelein, commander-in-chief of the army of the Vendée.
Stofflet, a gamekeeper, a general in his army.
Lagrange and Texier, peasant-soldiers in his army.
M. Jourdain, a celebrated scholar, also a physician.
Lorraine, his daughter.

HENRI DE LA ROCHEJAQUELEIN

[SCENE: *the town of Bressuire — January*, 1794. *At night in the house of* JOURDAIN; *in a room lined with books the white-haired scholar is seated near a lamp, reading. At a little distance his daughter sits in a high arm-chair, her lute in her lap.*]

LORRAINE [*sings to herself*].

Eyes blue as paradise,
  Wheat-yellow hair,
Shy as a girl who sighs,
  Comely and fair.

Taught at his mother's knee,
  God and the king,
Lives he for honor free,
  He whom we sing!

L. of C.

Cries he, " O follow me,
Who loves me true!"
Cry we, " M'sieur Henri,
Die we for you!"

JOURDAIN. Cease, cease, Lorraine! Must I repeat my words
Again and yet again? Forget these songs.
Thou art no longer in thy convent, child,
But in thy father's house, and here the name
Of royalist is never heard. Forget
The nonsense taught thee by the nuns.
'Tis strange
You women ever take the noble's side,
Tinsel and glitter lure your weaker minds.
[*He again reads.*

LORRAINE [*a moment later sings thoughtlessly*].

Eyes blue as paradise,
Wheat-yellow hair,
Shy as a girl who sighs,
Comely and fair.

Stately young paladin,
Gallant and just—

[*Loud knocking without.* JOURDAIN *rises, takes a light, and goes towards a door which is seen in the distance at the end of the hall.* LORRAINE *follows, and stands concealed by the portière.*]

JOURDAIN. Who knocks at such an hour?
STOFFLET [*without*]. Is this the house
Of Jourdain the physician?
JOURDAIN. Yes, his house,
What would you here? Why rouse you peaceful folk
In this late night, like wandering vagabonds?

[*He throws open a window beside the door and holds up his light to examine the strangers.*]

STOFFLET. Here's one, sore hurt, who needs your aid, good sir.
Fear not, we bear no arms. I pray you, open.
Though peasants, we can pay you well.
JOURDAIN. What cares
Jourdain for paltry coin! The day is past
Since gold has bought my skill! Peasants, you say?
With money in your purses? Ho, a rough
Suspicious crew you look. Raise up your heads.
Show me the wounded man. — Come. Enter in!

[*He gruffly unbars the door. Enter* HENRI DE LA ROCHEJAQUELEIN, *disguised as a peasant;*

STOFFLET; *and* LAGRANGE, *who supports* TEXIER. LORRAINE *returns to the library.*]

HENRI [*impulsively*]. Your deed is kinder than your words, in truth!

JOURDAIN. O ho, my stripling, you would make me kind?

Then save your breath! Kindness and all such play
I leave to weak aristocrats. I let
You enter here, because I have the power
To set your broken bones. But kindness — Ho!

[JOURDAIN, *in closing the window, pauses to listen as a troop of horsemen pass in the street beneath, with a rattle of musketry.*]

Still after the young Brigand! Soon, I trust,
The scoundrel hangs on high, and such as he
Who harry loyal citizens. Come, come.

[*He leads the way to an inner room.* HENRI *is going with the others, when* STOFFLET *grasps his arm.*]

STOFFLET. M'sieur Henri, I pray you follow not!
You heard his words. Go not within. This risk

You run is rash, against all will of mine.
Stay here with me and guard the door.
HENRI. Stofflet,
You mind me of our host, who growls, but does
His duty valiantly. No, let me go.
I would bring Texier courage in his pain.
STOFFLET. M'sieur Henri, your life is our last hope.
HENRI. Ah, bitter flattery!

LORRAINE [*within the library, sings to herself*].

Taught at his mother's knee,
God and the King,
Lives he for honor free,
He whom we sing!

Cries he, "O follow me,
Who loves me true!"
Cry we, "M'sieur Henri,
Die we for you!"

Peasant or noble leads,
He who is best,
Each feels his country's need,
Merit, our test.

Rugged our land may seem,
Rocky Bocage,
Love we each ford and stream —

[*She sees* HENRI *at the open portière, and drops her lute.*]

HENRI [*advances*]. Forgive my boldness in thus entering here
Unbidden, gentle maid. But I was led
By what you sang. For I did think my host
Jourdain, the famous scholar, known throughout
The Vendée land as firm Republican,
The stanch friend of the Blues.
LORRAINE. A moment past
My father chided me for my poor song!
HENRI. 'Twas only for its music that you sang?
The words, the meaning, these were naught to you?
LORRAINE. It seems disloyal here, beneath his roof,
To differ from my father. Yet I must.
The only leniency that I can crave
Is that I lived among the nuns at Mans,
And find myself almost a stranger here:
I fear I shall offend you when I say,
Alas, I love the words beyond the tune.

HENRI. Then he they call "Monsieur Henri" for you
Is not a brigand?
LORRAINE. A name the Blues may give!
But all my ballads call him paladin,
As valorous and just as those of old.
HENRI. It is the way of ballads to extol
Their hero. Why should he be praised above
The thousands who have left, as well as he,
Castle or farm, to follow the true cause?
LORRAINE. O, you have used a word that makes me think
That you may serve the lilies of our France,
You may be Royalist. I beg you tell
If you are friend or foe to our young chief,
Monsieur Henri?
HENRI. Both friend and foe! Believe
Me, when I say, you overrate him far.
LORRAINE. Though I have never seen him, still I hold
He is the very soul of our Vendée,
Its earnest inspiration, its one hope,
And when he falls the stricken land falls too.
O, in my convent, there we loved him well.
One of my comrades had a brother, who
Had served the cause throughout the sad campaign

In Brittany; and she could charm with tales
For hours together, tales her brother told.
Why, I can sing you full a dozen songs,
A dozen ballads of Monsieur Henri.

[*She snatches her lute, and sings.*]

He is fearless,
He is peerless,
Henri that is ours!
He our might is,
He our knight is,
Glad as summer flowers.

One-and-twenty smiles on him:
Days will flit and days will skim,
Days will flee, for you and me,
Flashing eyes grow slowly dim,
Still we raise our fervent hymn,
Never rest a shadow grim
On M'sieur Henri.

HENRI. It is his careless youth that steals their love!
And of what value, praise that's won by youth?
Could they withhold their loyal peasant hearts

Till Henri earned such frank unflattering trust,
Ah, were there time, he yet might prove a man.
For he has been till now a headstrong boy,
Lacking in foresight, judgment, in control.

LORRAINE. Beyond the reach of carping idle words
My hero stands. You cannot sully him.

HENRI. I would tear down your hero, but to shrine
One who can claim this title you ill-use,
Brave Cathelineau, the gentle wagoner
Who led us first, he of the shining brow,
Around whom crept the wounded, since to die
Near the sweet saint of Anjou was a joy.
They tell how Cincinnatus in his fields
Beyond the Tiber, leaning on his spade,
Received with dignity proud messengers,
How simply he did wipe his brow, and go
To govern Rome. As great, our general!
He heard the first stray shots of war, one day
While kneading bread; he left his homely task
And served as chief.

LORRAINE. Erect and slim, Henri
First took command. Dauntless the eagle look
Within his eyes when to his men he cried:
"Friends, were he here, my father, you would have
Glad confidence. O may I worthy prove!
When I advance, then on. But, if I flinch,

Straight cut the craven down. And when I fall
Avenge me." And from the great deserted court
Beneath the moated castle of his race,
Like his forefathers of the Crusade days,
He led his peasants forth.

HENRI. But none he left
Behind, to mourn his loss like brave Lescure,
Who had a wife he loved. From her, from books,
His cherished study, yet he tore himself;
And when they burned his castle to the ground,
He would not sack their captured towns, lest they,
The ruthless foe, should think it was revenge.
O, call Lescure your hero, not Henri.
Henri knew naught of war's stern discipline,
He led to battle as he would have led,
In peaceful days, the chase. Not like Lescure,
Well versed in tactics and in stratagems.

LORRAINE. I pray you, tell me more about the men
Who love Monsieur Henri.

HENRI. Say rather, men
Whom Henri loves, his rugged Vendée folk,
Whose lives are passed in patriarchal ways,
Who call their nobles Father, since no hand
Of grasping steward holds the guardianship.
No pay in war they claim, bloodshed they hate,
But striking for the cause of God and king,

They fight as tigers. Strict they are, and pious,
Each doffs his cap before the wayside cross,
Although he pause amid an onward rush.
And when the shots are heard, the women, maids,
And children kneel in every field, to pray
For their brave men in danger. Oft 'tis said,
In pleasantry, that when you hear an oath,
Strike without doubt, it surely is a Blue.

LORRAINE. Astray they seem in these grim times of ours,
They and their gallant Lord! They should have lived
When good King Louis held his saintly reign.

HENRI. The very children bear the hearts of men,
And in the ranks are lads of fourteen years.
Young Mondyon had scarcely reached that age,
When, in a vanguard fight, near him he saw
Some cowardly lieutenant quit his post:
"You are not wounded, sir," he cried; "now if
You go, I'll shoot you through the head. When we,
The leaders, quail, we shame our fearless men."

LORRAINE. Monsieur Henri's true mettle! When a shot
Once struck his arm, unmoved he kept command.
"Merely a broken thumb," he said, although,
Since then, his arm hangs useless in a sling.

HENRI. And every man within the ranks would do

The same. Alas, I speak as if it still
Were possible! O men that Henri loved,
Who were as his great children — all, all gone,
And his fair army broken, scattered, lost!
Bonchamp is gone, and noble Cathelineau,
Dearest of all, Lescure! And Herminé,
Who Bonchamp, dying, left to Henri's care,
The little lad who rode upon his horse,
Whose prattle cheered the men in darkest days,
Gone, gone! Even Fallowdeer, his delicate
White horse, is dead.

LORRAINE. Soon will my ballads grow
Too sad to sing.

[*She sings.*]

On Fallowdeer he swept the land,
And gathered far and wide each band,
Fleet Fallowdeer knew his command,
M'sieur Henri!

And when he captured foemen bold,
A single combat each could hold,
For well he loved the days of old
And chivalry.

In battle's din when flagged our side,
He seized his cap and flung it wide:
"Who'll fetch it for me first?" then cried
M'sieur Henri;

And swift as arrow from the bow,
He rushed upon the conquering foe,
And as one man we followed through
To victory.

"No powder have we, woe betide!"
Right blithely he our fears defied:
"The Blues have plenty of it!" cried
M'sieur Henri.

But I can sing no more.
Songs ring not true unless the heart is gay.
A wanderer! Defeat! Ah, yet I know,
Even in defeat, when all is lost, Henri
Will bear a spirit that will not be broken.
HENRI. But there has come to him in these last days,
A resignation, an unfailing portent
To tell the end is close. He would have chafed
Against defeat like a wild steer, a short

Time since; but, now I know not how it is,
Of late he has had thoughts that strengthen him,
And he has faced his failure. Though not wise,
Like his dear friend Lescure, who well could put
In words his lightest thought, Henri has felt
Perhaps 'tis for the best his cause is doomed.
For when he thinks of the long days to come,
The stretching years, the untold centuries,
When he will count but as a moment's space,
He tells himself, Flash in that moment's space
As bravely as you can, but fret not, leave
The rest to God.

LORRAINE. And no regret he feels?

HENRI. Regret he has passed through. His sole regret
Is, now that wider judgment is his own,
He cannot serve his needy land therewith.
Unthinking he has led his eager men,
Belied himself by weak-held discipline,
Could he be tried again, he would be found
A better general. Yet, had success
Been his, this patient creed would be unlearned.

LORRAINE. You draw for me a new Monsieur Henri,
A Henri that the ballads sing not of.
O is there none to solace him, not one?
He who could win as bride the noblest maid

In our fair France, is there no steadfast maid
To cheer him, when his soul is overcast?

HENRI. Too late has Henri thought of gentle maids,
And all the unexplored pure happiness
Their comradeship could give. So late almost
Upon his fingers he can count, the few
Sweet moments since his heart has turned to one.
No. Never has a woman smiled on him.

LORRAINE. Faithless I call the friend who says so false
A thing! And you who look as true —

[*She suddenly starts.*]

This fire
Glows warm. I beg you lay aside your cloak.

[HENRI *carelessly drops his cloak to the ground, exposing his right arm hanging in a sling; on his breast is sewed the badge of the Vendée army, a red heart.*]

LORRAINE. Monsieur Henri!

HENRI. Fain would I spare you this.
I too have learned how sad a thing it is
To lose ideals; and you, who cherished yours
With such intrepid noble confidence,

To find, alas, this dire reality,
A poor shred, a mockery of what you dreamt.
Monsieur Henri most humbly craves forgiveness.

LORRAINE. 'Twas even now I wondered, could there be
Two Henris here in France, two such as thou.

HENRI. O kindly maiden, thou wilt make me grieve
To leave this earth that hath no need of me.
Had I not entered here this night, to-morrow
I would have welcomed death, my heart untrammelled;
Now, life grows dear again.

LORRAINE. Why art thou sure
Thy fate must be so harsh? Hast thou no hope?

HENRI. None, none. For I am hounded through the land,
This bleak Vendée, all burnt and desolate,
Whose only music is the moaning wind,
And cries of cattle, homeless in the waste.
A wretched handful of our faithful men
Lurk in the forest of Vézin, our bed
A hut of withered boughs. Each morn I rise,
I say, We shall not look again on this
Once fair Bocage. No, no. It is too late.

LORRAINE. Monsieur Henri knows not his worth, to think
Our genial land hath now no need of him.

HENRI. He knows he must not harbor treacherous hope.
Nay, I have had a vision of this end:
Last night I tossed in pain and impotence,
When suddenly above the black-massed hill
I saw a gleam of light: The dawn at last,
I sighed. But not the dawn. There rose instead
A saffron-colored segment, cloud-begirt,
That caught its radiance in the pool-flecked marsh,
And in one special mere rained down its light.
So I, who thought to welcome death, the dawn
I longed for, sadly greet this moon of love.

LORRAINE. 'Tis strange, last night, I saw that very moon.
It rose so silently, so still and swift
That I did marvel at it. And as it rose
Its light grew more intense, till all the clouds
Lay far beneath, and without flaw it shone,
Because, I see it now, though then I knew
It not, because it drew frank fearlessness
From one clear pool that spread its heart below.

HENRI. But soon the tardy dawn, once longed for, came,
And then I lost my moon.

LORRAINE. 'Twas thou wert blind,
For it was there, although thou could'st not see it.

O I was taught by the good nuns at Mans
That after death there is a life beyond,
A life so rare and beautiful, it seemed
A puzzling thing that even they who told
Of this far land, should still have feared to go.
And thou too, hast this happy faith of mine,
For I have heard that when Monsieur Henri
Entered the fray, he made, unseen, the sign
Of our dear Lord's true cross upon his breast.
If there is life beyond, why should we grieve?
The moon is there, although we see it not.

HENRI. And thou wilt not forget that here on earth,
To this poor Henri, wandering in defeat,
A driven outcast whom your father scorns,
To him thou gav'st in pledge thy gentle troth?

LORRAINE. To my one hero, to my lord Henri —
He who has taught me what true manhood is.

HENRI [*timidly*]. Ah, dost thou find me somewhat like thy dream?

LORRAINE. Beyond desire my fancies have come true.

For, once I dreamt — but what are maidens' dreams?
A few vague shadows that will never be!
I think we are as birds that come and peep
Within the casement, and then fly away,
And hardly know what they have seen within.

HENRI. For if they pried too close they would be caught,
And ever after live within a cage,
Even if a golden one. Thus would I snare
A timid bird and hold her in my heart.
LORRAINE. Thy golden cage than gladdest liberty!
O, I would rather rest a fluttering bird
Within thy cage, than float a speck of joy
Over wild seas!
HENRI. Was that thy dream?
LORRAINE. The past
Is now as if it never were. Some one
There was who bore the name Lorraine, who sat
Within her father's library, or strolled
Behind the convent walls, and plucked a rose,
And wondered what could lie without the walls:
There once was such a one, but in far days,
Since when her dreams have grown realities.
HENRI. Bold, all-possessing are the dreams of men,
But never thought of man could match, could know
The perfectness of this.
LORRAINE. Thou too hast dreamt?
HENRI. Forgotten is my past, erased like thine,
This present only lives.

[LORRAINE *draws aside, and tremblingly touches her lute.*]

Ah, do not move,
But let my memory, now molten, fix
Thy image thus! So shall I see thee stand
In days to come, thy hand upon thy lute.

LORRAINE. Then will I sing thee one more memory,
The saddest and the sweetest song I know,
Not quite a song, but words I sing in tune;
And when discouragement doth come to grieve
Thy faith, thou wilt remember it and me.

[*She sings.*]

Better to be a crystal and be broken
Than dull clay like a tile upon the roof,
Better to put thy courage, doubtful-hearted,
Unto the proof.

O in success there often lurks a failure
That feeds upon the soul in hidden shame,
And in defeat there sometimes rests a triumph
Greater than fame.

[*Outside, loud excited voices are heard; hurrying steps in the hall.* LAGRANGE, *with* TEXIER, *rushes past the door. Enter* STOFFLET, *hastily.*]

STOFFLET. Monsieur Henri, haste, haste, for we are
known!
A careless word of Texier's gave the clew,
And with the cry of "Brigands" he has gone
To rouse the garrison. There yet is time
To fly, but haste! The others are gone on!

[HENRI *waves him back, and turns to* LORRAINE.]

HENRI. And have I only found thee but to say
Farewell? Then fare thee well, true heart. I shall
Remember thee and thy brave words forever.
I pray thee lay thy hand upon my head
In peaceful benediction. I am thy knight
Henceforth, if thou'lt accept for servitor
One who can bring no trophies with his love.

[*He kneels and raises her hand to his brow.*]

LORRAINE. No jewelled sleeve, no banner can I give,
Henri, my dauntless knight. Ah, when thou art
In heaven, I fear thou wilt forget me soon.
Swear thou wilt not. Nay, promise naught. I would
Not bind thy soul, just freed its weary earth.
Thou art so true, Henri, that thou wouldst keep
Thy word, even if in heaven were maids so fair,

The loveliest here were but a sorry choice.
No promise. But when with the seraphs thou
Art radiant as they, if thou shouldst then
Remember me, I shall be waiting here.

[*Reënter* STOFFLET: *he places* HENRI'S *cloak on his shoulders.*]

STOFFLET. M'sieur Henri!

[HENRI *goes with him: at the door he turns to look back:* LORRAINE *smiles bravely, touches her lute and sings as they gaze at each other.*]

LORRAINE. And in defeat there sometimes rests a triumph
Greater than fame.

[*Curtain falls.*]

Henri de la Rochejaquelein, shot by a Blue in the forest of Vézin, January 28, 1794.

NOTES

PAGE 27

"As if its waters were the rippling Lee."

See Wordsworth's sonnet on Isaac Walton: —

"He found the longest summer day too short
To his loved pastime given by sedgy Lee."

PAGE 79

Chronicle of Limburg, 1480.

See Heine's *Geständnisse.*

PAGE 85

Cries out "Captain Ill"

"And captive good attending captain ill."

Shakespeare — Sonnet lxiii.

PAGE 89

"The earliest pipe of half-awakened bird."

"The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds."

Tennyson: Tears, idle tears.

Page 97

Henri de la Rochejaquelein.

See the *Memoires* of Mme. Louis de la Rochejaquelein, formerly Mme. de Lescure. Also Louise Imogen Guiney's delightful account, *Monsieur Henri.*

Page 118

Better to be a crystal and be broken,
Than idle like a tile upon the roof.

From an old Chinese proverb.

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